

Preliminary Remarks on Interview:

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended to their attorney during the telephone interview of February 2, 2010.

During that interview, the prior art was reviewed, and the present invention was discussed. With respect to the prior art, Hartmann, Hirt, and Avellone, it was pointed out that they each are concerned with placing a uniform coating on the entire surface of each of their strips. Hartmann metal coats the surface(s) of a plastic film (1) as the first process step in multi-step process for making micro-electronic circuits. A second process step of forming a pattern in the metal coating, and a third process step of forming individual circuits is not addressed by Hartmann. Hirt galvanizes a metal steel strip (5) by first applying a nickel coating and then applying a nickel/zinc top coating. The entire face(s) of the Hirt steel strip (5) is(are) coated, just as Hartmann coats the entire surface of his plastic film (10). Avellone, like Hirt galvanizes steel strips (12). Like Hartmann and Hirt, the entire surface(s) of the Avellone strip (12) are coated.

Also discussed, was applicants' present invention which coats previously formed metal structures formed on a film and isolated from one another on the film. Discussed were several limitations which appeared to distinguish the invention over the cited prior art. The first of these was that applicants' ion-permeable isolation layer (13) covered the entire length of each of their anodes, i.e., counter electrodes (4) extending through an electrolysis region (M).

The second was that this isolation layer (13) did not have a primary purpose of supporting applicants' work piece (1), i.e., did not have a primary purpose of being in constant contact with applicants' work piece (1), i.e., strip (1) in order to keep it straight as it passed through a processing module (M). This is contrary to Hartmann's use of his tampons (66, 67). In fact, applicants recite the use of guide rollers for keeping their film "straight". In one embodiment of the present invention the film was permitted to contact the isolation layer so that the isolation layer "wipes" each coated individual structure; in another embodiment, a small space was provided between the film path and the isolation layer

coated counter electrodes/ anodes (4). Applicants utilize transport rollers (25) before and behind each module (M) to prevent any friction from the coating (13) coming into contact with the work piece/ film, whereby such friction would cause applicants' strip (1) to elongate. It is clear that Hartmann's tampon structure could not operatively be applied to applicants' device.

While not discussed during the interview it should now be mentioned that applicants' counter electrodes/ anodes (4) are formed from expanded metal.

The third was that applicant utilizes washing stations for washing their contacting electrodes. Regarding this feature, the Examiner remarked that applicants' claims as previously examined did not claim this feature as a structure.

The fourth was that applicants' claim language was vague as what is exactly meant by "inclined to the horizontal".

The proposed amendments to Figs. 2 and 8 were reviewed and appeared acceptable. The amendments to the paragraphs on pages 10, 21, and 35 and the abstract were reviewed and appeared acceptable.

Applicants have now amended their claims to recite the distinguishable features discussed during the interview.

In the Drawings:

- I) In Fig. 2, add the electrically conductive structure (S) on the work piece (1). This structure is disclosed both explicitly and intrinsically in the specification, as appears in publication US 2006/0201817, at least at paragraphs [0015], [0019], [0020], [0026], [0048], [0058], [0075], [0085], [0089], [0095], [0097], and [0098]. The presence of this structure and its relationship to the contact electrodes (6, 14) is readily understood by one of ordinary skill in the relevant art.
- II) In Figs. 2 and 8, add the rinsing facilities (R) for washing or spraying (R). In Fig. 2 add the air knives (A). The rinsing limitation is disclosed in original claims 16 and 33; and in original specification published at paragraph [0033]
- III) No new matter has been added. Replacement Sheets are appended hereto.